

24.200: Ancient Philosophy
Professor Sally Haslanger
Sept. 13, 2004

Characteristic Socratic Theses

Socrates realized that his defense was not only a response to the specific charges; those he was apt to flatly deny. He was on trial also for his way of life. His challenge was to show the jury that his life was a life of virtue, and so could not be a basis for charges of impiety and corruption.

1. Care of the soul is of primary importance.
Apology: 29e-30b, 36c Crito: 47e-48b
2. In considering what course of action to follow, one should only consider what is right/wrong, just/unjust.
Apology: 28b Crito: 48c-d
3. Philosophical inquiry is morally therapeutic.
Apology: 30a-31a, 36c-37a, 38a
Corollary: The unexamined life is not worth living.
4. Socrates knows that he does not have knowledge, and that is all.
Apology: 20c, 20e, 21d, 23b
5. No one can harm a good person.
Apology: 30c-d, 41c-d
6. No one deliberately does harm [injustice].
Apology: 25d-26a